

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
BECK HALL, 3435 MAIN ST.
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214-3004
PHONE: 716-829-2591 FAX: 716-829-3776
E-MAIL: tkniazuk@buffalo.edu
www.erie.gov/enrp

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To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Government Affairs Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon

Re: May and June, 2005 meetings

Date: June 24, 2005

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Government Affairs Subcommittee met May 19 and June 14, 2005 at the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. Present for the May meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Allen, Andreucci, Anello, and Wanamaker, as well as ENRP member Tim Doolittle. Present for the June meeting were subcommittee members Ellis, Meal, and Wanamaker (proxy).

Regional Economic Development Outreach:

Approval was granted in 2004 to organize an educational forum in conjunction with the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise on the BNE's role in economic development, the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS), the county IDAs, and ENRP, the Regional Economic Development Database and Site Finder; all presented in the context of the economic development process for the region.

The presentation will begin with a brief overview of ENRP and its current efforts, then focus on the region's economic development strengths, challenges, efforts, and successes. It will conclude by calling on municipal officials to become involved in the process, and give them examples of how to do so. The presentation will be slightly altered to reflect each county, as separate presentations will be made in Niagara and Erie. The target dates are early 2005.

In conjunction with the presentation, a handout will be developed that includes all the pertinent contact information and specific opportunities for municipal involvement in the regional economic development process. We will also offer multiple options for feedback, and will look to tape the events for broadcast.

In light of the fact that municipalities in Erie County have been focused on dealing with that county's budget crisis, the presentation was put on hold, but we will now move forward with it once again.

Niagara Falls Air Base

The Subcommittee recognized the fact that the recommended closing of the Niagara Falls Air Base had regional implications, and therefore recommended that this be the featured topic for the June 24, 2005 general meeting. As such, Mr. Merrell Lane, President of the Niagara Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) is the guest speaker at the aforementioned meeting.

Electronic Permitting

The Subcommittee would like to receive a status report on the electronic (smart) permitting initiative. The last we heard of the project was that it was ready to go on-line, pending authorization by Erie County (the funder of the project). Perhaps the general body needs to investigate this matter and take appropriate action?

Brainstorming

The Subcommittee "went around the room" to discuss ENRP and the Government Affairs Subcommittee in general, and its efforts to work with the two counties' municipalities. Several key points came of this, and we believe the general body should examine these further.

Subcommittee Member Allen credited ENRP for its work on several important regional initiatives such as the Regional Economic Development Database, electronic permitting, the Economic Development Working Group / Regional Economic Development Strategy, the Regional Cultural Tourism Program / Buffalo-Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative, and the Framework for Regional Growth. This work, however, tends to get "claimed" by others and either gets stalled, or if successful they get the credit for our good work. Allen asserted that – especially in light of Erie County's troubles – ENRP would be a good choice to take a lead in implementing these initiatives.

The Subcommittee agreed, and noted that many ENRP members are on the steering committees of these projects (albeit not in their capacity as ENRP members). While they may suggest ENRP for a role, once someone else in the room disagrees they do not take the discussion further. The Subcommittee asks the general body: Why not? What, if anything, can we collectively do to make them comfortable enough and confident enough in ENRP to have them willing to carry our name into these conversations?

On the topic of outreach, Subcommittee Member Wanamaker suggested that as we do our outreach, we identify key senior managers in municipal government to be included. They oftentimes carry over from one administration to another, and would usually be

the ones charged with carrying out our initiatives at their level of government. Is there a mechanism for regular communication at this level, and is it something worth fostering? The same could apply to the Planning Boards.

The impact of the Erie County budget crisis on current and future regional initiatives was also mentioned, as was the possibility that people may be more wary of regionalism in the current climate.

Finally, Wanamaker noted that so far what's been talked about most in this region is regional *government*, not regional *governance*. The differences between the two should be explained.